

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Swedish Evangelical Mission Covenant Church of Portland (OTd)
and/or common Swedish Tabernacle

2. Location

street & number 1624 NW Glisan Street N/A not for publication
city, town Portland N/A vicinity of congressional district First
state Oregon code 41 county Multnomah code 051

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>N/A</u> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<u>N/A</u> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: <u>Union Hall</u>

4. Owner of Property

name Columbia River Pensioners Memorial Association
street & number 422 NW 17th
city, town Portland N/A vicinity of state Oregon 97209

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Multnomah County Courthouse
street & number 1021 SW 4th Avenue
city, town Portland state Oregon 97204

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Statewide Inventory of Historic Properties has this property been determined eligible? yes no
date 1982 federal state county local
depository for survey records State Historic Preservation Office
city, town Salem state Oregon 97310

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date <u>N/A.</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Swedish Tabernacle, built in 1912, is a straightforward, solidly-constructed two-story building of brick masonry with a ground course of rock-cut masonry and basement. It has a touch of the Battlemented or Castellated Style in the treatment of its central entrance bay. It is rectangular in plan, measuring c. 50 x 100 feet, and is oriented with its longitudinal axis north to south. It is situated at the southeast corner of NW 17th Avenue and NW Glisan Street in a mixed-use neighborhood on the periphery of Portland's downtown core. The immediate area is zoned commercial, though some residential use occurs. The area contains some light industry and warehouses.

The building's street facades are finished with red face brick. The principal, or north facade fronting NW Glisan is organized symmetrically into three bays with frameless casement windows with brick sills and tripartite banks of casement windows lighting the uppermost level. The entrance consists of paired, double-leaf doors with mullioned top lights recessed behind the main wall plane. The entrance and a quadripartite window bank above it are framed by a battlemented motif consisting of brick piers and a crenellated "pediment" created by the application of raking moldings to the wall surface. Corner piers rise without interruption to the straight-topped parapet, which terminates in a central, stepped gable and is finished with coping of galvanized sheet metal. The parapet conceals a flat, built-up roof. The upper wall is articulated with string courses of header and vertically-laid stretcher bricks. Both entrance pediment and parapet gable were originally surmounted by Latin crosses of modest scale.

The west facade, fronting NW 17th Avenue, is divided into five wide bays by corner piers and continuous strip pilasters extending to the parapet. Upper wall treatment is the same as that of the main facade, and fenestration in outer bays is similar to that of the main facade except that upper story windows in the southernmost bay are double-hung instead of casement windows. The center three bays contain an arcade of windows lighting the auditorium. In these bays, ground level windows are grouped in quadripartite banks and are separated from large, mullioned, segmental-arched openings above by inset brick spandrel panels. In each of the three bays the two levels of windows are framed by a continuous arched molding of brick.

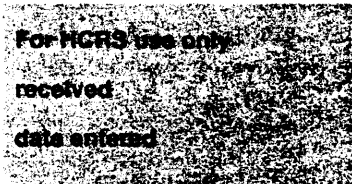
The south elevation is unarticulated, and its window openings are concentrated in the central, recessed bay. The east elevation, also unarticulated, is blind except for openings in the southeast corner and in the center.

According to church tradition, the building was designed by three members of the congregation with the object of making it substantial enough to be marketable as a warehouse, perhaps, when the time came for the congregation to sell its property and move on to a new site. Church records show that the brick contractor was A. V. Anderson.¹

The interior of the Swedish Tabernacle is arranged with entrance stairway and foyer landing at the north end. Curved staircases on east and west sides lead to the balcony of the auditorium. A cloakroom occupies the northwest corner. The auditorium space is two stories in height, and its walls are finished with plaster and wainscoting. Staircases ascend from the main floor to the balcony along either side wall. The face of the U-shaped balcony is decorated with a repeating motif of plaster rosettes. A choir stall and organ were contained in the southeast corner of the auditorium, and the altar or pulpit were placed before an alcove making up the central bay of the south wall.

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At the mezzanine level, at the north end of the church, is a small room known as the Mizpah Room which was used for committee meetings and to house the church library.

The south end of the building, behind the auditorium, contained three floors: the pastor's office on the ground floor, the pastor's residence on the mezzanine, and the custodian's quarters on the uppermost floor.² The basement, reached by stairs at either end of the building, is a large, unsubdivided space with three rows of columns along its longitudinal axis.

Certain minor changes were made as the Longshoremen's Union adapted the building to its purposes beginning in 1954. These changes included the removal of the facade crosses and the double-leaf front doors with their panels of grillework, removal of ground story pews and surfacing the auditorium floor with linoleum tile; and the partitioning of a small office space in the northwest corner of the main floor of the auditorium.³ To date, the Swedish Tabernacle has suffered no appreciable loss of its functional or stylistic character.

¹Interview, April 1982, Terry Landsem of Roy Young, member of the congregation which formerly occupied the Swedish Tabernacle.

²Ibid.

³Ibid. The original pews are reported to be in the Reorganized Church of Latter Day Saints, Portland.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1912 Builder/Architect Anonymous

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The two-story, brick masonry building at 17th and Glisan in Northwest Portland commonly known as the Swedish Tabernacle was built in 1912 to house the Swedish Evangelical Mission Covenant Church of Portland, an outgrowth of the Swedish Evangelical Mission Covenant Church of America formed by immigrants in 1885. Portland's Swedish Mission Church was organized in 1887 and its members met in a frame building in the Gothic style on the site of the nominated area until the congregation outgrew its facilities and plans were developed for the present structure. While Sunday School branches were established in various distant neighborhoods in the city, the Tabernacle was the center of worship, social service, and fellowship for the Swedish Evangelical Mission Church until it was vacated in 1953. The building's auditorium, with its generous floor space and balcony seating, made it suitable for subsequent use by the Longshoremen's Union, beginning in 1954. The building is a plain, rectangular volume having street facades finished with red face brick. Its facades are articulated by vertical stretcher string courses and piers and strip pilasters which extend without interruption from the ground course to the straight-topped parapet. The principal facade, fronting Glisan Street, is distinguished by a central stepped parapet gable--originally surmounted by a cross, and by a portico surround incorporating a mock triangular gable or pediment in the battlemented style with cross termination. The building is said to have been designed by members of the congregation with the idea of its being sold for warehouse use at a later date. Indeed, this tradition seems borne out by the building's substantial, straightforward character. The Swedish Tabernacle is significant for its stylistic singularity among Portland church buildings, and above all, for its association with Portland's Swedish community from the date of its construction at the peak of immigration to 1953.*

The Swedish Tabernacle housed the Swedish Evangelical Mission Covenant Church of Portland for over forty years. The direct descendant of this congregation is the First Covenant Church, which now meets at 45th and East Burnside on the East Side. The roots of the First Covenant Church go beyond the building at 17th and Glisan Street; the Tabernacle represents both a connection with, and a manifestation of an older tradition.

The distant origins of the Covenant Church are found in the pietistic renewal movements of 16th and 17th century Europe.¹ Its more concrete beginnings derived from the work of George Scot, an English Evangelical minister who preached in Sweden during the 1830s. Scot was a religious activist and outspoken organizer of a new religious awakening. This renewal was directed at the loss of vitality in terms of ideas and practice manifested in the state Lutheran Church.²

Scot was deported from Sweden in 1842, but his work continued under the leadership of C. O. Rosenius, and Peter Waldenstrom. It was the focus of their work that

". . . the church . . . be renewed from the inside--through small groups called 'conventicles', Bible study, the distribution of Christian

9. Major Bibliographical References

Nelson, F. Burton, The Story of the People of God, Chicago; Covenant Press, 1971.
The Fiftieth Year, Portland, Oregon: The Swedish Mission Church, 1937. Booklet
 commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Swedish Evangelical Mission Covenant
 Church of Portland.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one (50 x 100')

Quadrangle name Portland, Oregon-Washington

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

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 Zone Easting Northing

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Verbal boundary description and justification The Swedish Tabernacle occupies the west half (50 feet) of Lots 6 and 7 of Block 153, Couch's Addition to the City of Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon. Ref. Tax Account No. R-18021-3340.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code
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state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title William W. Manlove

organization N/A

date December 1981

street & number 9311 SW Boones Ferry Road

telephone (503) 245-7553

city or town Portland

state Oregon 97219

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

date September 1, 1982

For HCERS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date 10/7/82


Keeper of the National Register

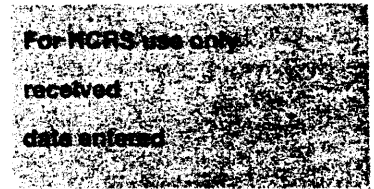
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
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literature throughout the land, and preaching."³

In the 1860s and 1870s, thousands of Swedes came to America. With them, they brought this awakened religious spirit and many soon organized into small groups of "Mission Friends" throughout the central states.

On February 20, 1885, these groups organized under a central name--The Swedish Evangelical Mission Covenant of America.⁴ They embodied the ideas of Scot, Rosenius and Waldenstrom and placed an emphasis on the propagation of those ideas.

The Tabernacle on Glisan Street in Portland, Oregon is a result of this emphasis on missionary work. Although a movement for a Swedish Mission church was begun by Swedes living in Portland in 1881, it was not until missionary Adolph Lydell stopped in Portland briefly enroute from service in Alaska in 1887 that plans for an organized church began to develop.⁵

Through Lydell's initiative, an empty store building at 14th and Flanders Street, outfitted with benches and a pulpit, became the location of the Swedish Evangelical Mission Church of Portland.⁶ By Christmas 1887, the group had moved to a new framechurch in the Gothic Style located on the site of the present building.⁷

During its early years, the church struggled financially. Contributions from the congregation supported the minister. Festivals and extra programs were held to raise money and to promulgate the faith. By 1909, an assistant pastor and another chapel at Skidmore and Michigan Streets indicated that the church was growing. By 1912, a larger building was required to house this growth, and the Tabernacle--so called by the congregation itself--was built.⁸

For the next forty one years, the Tabernacle played a pivotal role in the lives of many Swedish-Americans living throughout Portland. Various Sunday schools such as the Elim, Brooklyn, South Portland, Vernon, Montavilla and St. John's schools sprang up around the city to accommodate those who lived far away from the Tabernacle. Yet the Tabernacle served more than a religious function for its members. The Tabitha Ladies Society organized to perform social services and to support missionaries abroad. The choir, the Young People's Society and the Covenant Women's Society also provided a sense of fellowship and community.⁹ It was this combination of religious tradition and community cohesiveness that made the Swedish Tabernacle a special place for its members. That it was associated with a distinct ethnic heritage makes it a significant place, for it is a reminder of the pluralistic roots of the larger Portland community of today.

1. F. Burton Nelson, The Story of the People of God (Chicago: Covenant Press, 1971) p. 390.
2. Ibid., p. 391
3. Ibid., p. 392
4. Ibid., p. 400
5. The Fiftieth Year (Portland, OR: The Swedish Mission Church, 1937), p. 11.

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received

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6. Ibid., p. 13
7. Ibid., p. 12
8. Ibid., p. 15
9. Ibid., p. 29

* Portland attracted a significant number of Swedish immigrants from the 1880s to the 1920s. In 1920, the Swedish foreign born population reached a high of 10.7% of the total foreign born population, or 2% of the total population of the city. By 1940, the Swedish-born population had declined to 9.4% of the total foreign born, or 1.2% of Portland's population.

It is said that one of the factors determining the building of the Tabernacle on the original site acquired in 1887 was the number of single females in the congregation who could walk to church or take street cars conveniently from their jobs as resident domestics and governesses for well-to-do families in the Nob Hill area and developing West Hills.